

SEXUAL ABUSE PROTOCOL

Definitions:

These procedures are to be followed when it is suspected that an individual receiving services or staff may have been sexually abused or assaulted.

Guidelines:

1. Staff are to assure the immediate safety and protection of persons involved in an alleged incident of forced sexual activity.
2. Verbal reports of sexual abuse are to be responded to with sensitivity and respect. Staff are to listen to the individual's account of events. Do not "put words in an individual's mouth" by guessing what may have happened or suggesting that an event was a product of force or "rape" if the individual did not use this language. (Professional or administrative staff should assist in assessment of events should there be any question.)
3. When it is suspected that an individual is being sexually abused, the staff discovering the situation should stop the behavior and separate the individuals immediately.
4. The nurse in charge, supervisor, AOD, and facility director/executive director should be notified.
5. The AOD and nurse in charge should preserve all evidence in the immediate environment by making sure that nothing in the area is touched or moved and look for any signs or evidence of intercourse such as: arousal, feces, presence of body fluids. The people allegedly involved in the incident are not to bathe before medical examination and clothing articles are to be kept in their original condition to assist investigative efforts.
6. The program/facility director shall report the incident in accordance with departmental policy and state law.
7. The nursing staff/health care provider shall respond to the report without delay, assess for any evidence of physical injury, and make immediate arrangements for a medical examination. A nurse or staff person familiar with the person should accompany them for the medical examination and remain throughout the examination.
8. The physician will arrange for immediate transfer to the emergency room of one of the local hospitals equipped to do any required tests and counseling. Law enforcement may institute a sexual abuse protocol and refer individual for medical examination.
9. Informed consent should be sought from the individual prior to any medical examination. If the person is unable to give informed consent, then procedures established for obtaining consent in SCDDSN policy should be followed.
10. The staff shall document in writing the behavior, actions taken, observations made of evidence of intercourse, if any, and complete an incident report.
11. The parents/guardians/family representative should be notified of the incident as soon as possible by the facility director/executive director or designee (i.e., family member of both the perpetrator and victim).